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**January 22, 2009**

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## **CARDIN LAUDS APPOINTMENT OF GEORGE MITCHELL AS SPECIAL ENVOY FOR THE MIDDLE EAST**

*Washington, DC – U.S. Senator Benjamin L. Cardin (D-MD), a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and incoming Chairman of the U.S. Helsinki Commission, released the following statement in response to President Obama’s selection of former Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell as Special Envoy for the Middle East:*

“George Mitchell is a man of integrity and a diplomat in the greatest sense. I was pleased to hear of his appointment as *Special Envoy for the Middle East*. Senator Mitchell has a distinguished and successful record of guiding parties with seemingly intractable positions to a place of dialogue and agreement. His re-engagement in the region promises to provide a calming and patient voice that can guide neighbors, through meaningful negotiations, back toward a path of peaceful co-existence through mutual recognition, mutual respect, free-flowing commerce, and respect for human rights.

“I welcome the immediacy of this appointment, coming just days after President Obama was sworn into office, as a clear sign of renewed American engagement in a region essential to our national security and so desperately in need of peace and stability.”

Senator Cardin also welcomed President Obama’s announcement of Richard Holbrooke, former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, as Special U.S. Representative to Afghanistan and Pakistan.

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